

John Welles's Catechism
of a ministerial member.



R. Canine, 1817.

THE LATE

JOHN WILKES'S
C A T E C H I S M

OF A

MINISTERIAL MEMBER,

TAKEN

From an Original Manuscript in Mr. WILKES's
Handwriting, never before printed, and adapted
to the present Occasion.

With Permission.

L O N D O N :

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THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

1780

BY JOHN MITCHELL

1780

Printed and Sold by G. B. BOSTON, at the
Sign of the Anchor, in the City of Boston.

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A CATECHISM,

THAT IS TO SAY,

*An Instruction, to be learned of every Person before he
be brought to be confirmed a Placeman or Pensioner
by the Minister.*

Question.

WHAT is your Name?

Answer. Lick Spittle.

Q. Who gave you this Name?

A. My Sureties to the Ministry, in my Political Change, wherein I was made a Member of the Majority, the Child of Corruption, and a Locust to devour the good Things of this Kingdom.

Q. What did your Sureties then for you?

A. They did promise and vow three things in my Name. First, that I should renounce the Reformists and all their Works, the pomps and vanity of Popular Favour, and all the sinful lusts of Independence. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Court Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep the Minister's sole Will and Commandments, and walk in the same, all the days of my life.

Q. Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?

A. Yes verily, and for my own sake, so I will; and I heartily thank our heaven-born Ministry, that they have called me to this state of elevation, through my own flattery, cringing, and bribery; and I shall pray to their successors to give me their assistance, that I may continue the same unto my life's end.

Q. Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief?

A. I believe in GEORGE, the Regent Almighty, Maker of New Streets and Knights of the Bath;

And in the present Ministry, his only choice, who were conceived of Toryism, brought forth of WILLIAM PITT, suffered loss of Place under CHARLES JAMES FOX, were execrated, dead, and buried. In a few months they rose again from their minority; they re-ascended to the Treasury Benches, and sit at the right hand of a little man in a large wig; from whence they laugh at the Petitions of the People, who pray for Reform, and that the sweat of their brow may procure them Bread.

I believe that King James the Second was a legitimate Sovereign, and that King William the Third was not; that the Pretender was of the right line, and that George the Third's Grandfather was not; that the dynasty of Bourbon is immortal; and that the glass in the eye of Lord James Murray, was not Betty Martin. I believe in the immaculate purity of the Committee of Finance, in the independence of the Committee of Secresy, and that the Pitt System is everlasting. Amen.

Q. What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?

A. First, I learn to forswear all conscience, which was never meant to trouble me, nor the rest of the tribe of Courtiers. Secondly to swear black is white, or white black, according to the good pleasure of the Ministers. Thirdly, to put on the helmet of impudence, the only armour against the shafts of patriotism.

Q. You said that your Sureties did promise for you, that you should keep the Minister's Commandments: tell me how many there be?

A. Ten.

Q. Which be they?

Answer.

The same to which the Minister for the time being always obliges all his creatures to swear, I the Minister am the Lord thy liege, who brought thee out of Want and Beggary, into the House of Commons.

I. Thou shalt have no other Patron but me.

II. Thou shalt not support any measure but mine, nor shalt thou frame clauses of any bill in its progress to the House above, or in the Committee beneath, or when the Mace is under the table, except it be mine. Thou shalt not bow to Lord COCHRANE, nor shake hands with him, nor any other of my real

opponents; for I thy Lord am a jealous Minister, and forbid familiarity of the Majority, with the Friends of the People, unto the third and fourth cousins of them that divide against me; and give Places, and thousands and tens of thousands, to them that divide with me, and keep my Commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the Pension of thy Lord the Minister in vain; for I the Minister will force him to accept the Chilterns that taketh my Pension in vain.

IV. Remember that thou attend the Minister's Levee day; on other days thou shalt speak for him in the House, and fetch and carry, and do all that he commandeth thee to do; but the Levee day is for the glorification of the Minister thy Lord: In it thou shalt do no work in the House, but shall wait upon him, thou, and thy daughter, and thy wife, and the Members, that are within his influence; for on other days the Minister is inaccessible, but delighteth in the Levee day; wherefore the Minister appointed the Levee day, and chatteth thereon familiarly, and is amused with it.

V. Honor the Regent and the helmets of the Life Guards, that thy stay may be long in the Place, which thy Lord the Minister giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not call starving to death murder.

VII. Thou shalt not call Royal gallivanting adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not say, that to rob the Public is to steal.

IX. Thou shalt bear false witness against the People.

X. Thou shalt not covet the People's applause, thou shalt not covet the People's praise, nor their good name, nor their esteem, nor their reverence, nor any reward that is theirs.

Q. What dost thou chiefly learn by these Commandments?

A. I learn two things—my duty towards the Minister, and my duty towards myself.

Q. What is thy duty towards the Minister?

A. My duty towards the Minister is, to trust him as much as I can; to fear him; to honor him with all my words, with all my bows, with all my scrapes, and all my cringes; to flatter him; to give him thanks to give up my whole soul to him; to idolize his name, and obey his word; and serve him blindly all the days of his political life.

Q. What is thy duty towards thyself?

A. My duty towards myself is to love nobody but myself, and to do unto most men what I would not they should do unto me; to sacrifice to my own interest even my father and mother; to pay little reverence to the King, but to compensate that omission by my servility to all that are put in authority under him; to lick the dust under the feet of my superiors, and to shake a rod of iron over the backs of my inferiors; to spare the People by neither word or deed; to observe neither truth nor justice in my dealings with them; to bear them malice and hatred in my heart; and where their wives and properties are concerned, to keep my body neither in temperance, soberness, nor chastity, but to give my hands to picking and stealing, and my tongue to evil speaking and lying, and slander of their efforts to defend their liberties and recover their rights: never failing to envy their privileges, and to learn to get the Pensions of myself and my colleagues out of the People's labour, and to do my duty in that department of public plunder unto which it shall please the Minister to call me.

Q. My good Courtier, know this, that thou art not able of thyself to preserve the Minister's favour, nor to walk in his Commandments, nor to serve him, without his special protection; which thou must at all times learn to obtain by diligent application. Let me hear therefore, if thou canst rehearse the Minister's Memorial.

Answer.

OUR Lord who art in the Treasury, whatsoever be thy name, thy power be prolonged, thy will be done throughout the empire, as it is in each session. Give us our usual sops, and forgive us our occasional absences on divisions; as we promise not to forgive them that divide against thee. Turn us not out of our Places; but keep us in the House of Commons, the land of Pensions and Plenty; and deliver us from the People. Amen.

Q. What desirest thou of the Minister in this Memorial?

A. I desire the Minister, our Patron, who is the disposer of the Nation's overstrained Taxation, to give his protection unto me and to all Pensioners and Placemen, that we may vote for him, serve him, and obey him, as far as we find it convenient; and I beseech the Minister that he will give us all things that be needful, both for our reputation and appearance in the House and out of it; that he will be favourable to us, and forgive us.

our negligences; that it will please him to save and defend us, in all dangers of life and limb, from the People, our natural enemies; and that he will help us in fleecing and grinding them; and this I trust he will do out of care for himself, and our support of him through our corruption and influence; and therefore I say Amen. So be it.

Q. How many Tests hath the Minister ordained?

A. Two only, as generally necessary to elevation: (that is to say) Passive Obedience and Bribery.

Q. What meanest thou by this word Test?

A. I mean an outward visible sign of an inward intellectual meanness, ordained by the Minister himself as a pledge to assure him thereof.

Q. How many Parts are there in this Test?

A. Two; the outward visible sign, and the inward intellectual meanness.

Q. What is the outward visible sign or Form of passive obedience?

A. Dangling at the Minister's heels, whereby the person is degraded beneath the baseness of a slave, in the character of a Pensioner, Placeman, Expectant Parasite, Toadeater, or Lord of the Bedchamber.

Q. What is the inward and intellectual meanness?

A. A death unto Freedom, a subjection unto perpetual Thralldom: for being by nature born free, and the children of Independence, we are hereby made children of slavery.

Q. What is required of persons submitting to the Test of Passive Obedience?

A. Apostacy, whereby they forsake Liberty; and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of the Minister, made to them upon submitting to that Test.

Q. Why was the Test of Bribery ordained?

A. For the continual support of the Minister's influence, and the feeding of us, his needy creatures and sycophants.

Q. What is the outward part or sign in the Test of Bribery?

A. Bank notes, which the Minister hath commanded to be offered by his dependants.

Q. Why then are beggars submitted to this Test, when by reason of their poverty they are not able to go through the necessary forms?

A. Because they promise them by their Sureties; which promise, when they come to lucrative offices, they themselves are bound to perform.

Q. What is the inward part, or thing signified?

A. The industry and wealth of the People, which are verily and indeed taken and had by Pensioners and Sinecurists, in their Corruption.

Q. What are the benefits whereof you are partakers thereby?

A. The weakening and impoverishing the People, through, the loss of their Liberty and Property, while our wealth becomes enormous, and our pride intolerable.

Q. What is required of them who submit to the Test of Bribery and Corruption?

A. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of any signs of former honour and patriotism, stedfastly purposing henceforward to be faithful towards the Minister; to draw on and off like his glove; to crouch to him like a Spaniel; to purvey for him like a jackall; to be as supple to him as Alderman Sir WILLIAM TURTLE; to have the most lively faith in the funds, especially in the Sinking Fund; to believe the words of Lord CASTLEREAGH alone; to have remembrance of nothing but what is in the Courier; to hate MATTHEW WOOD, the present Lord Mayor, and his second Mayoralty, with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength; to admire Sir JOHN SILVESTER, the Recorder, and Mr. JOHN LANGLEY*; and to be in charity with those only who have something to give.

* Otherwise Jack Ketch.

Here endeth the Catechism.

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